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THE HAPPIEST PERSON ON EARTH

A true story of love, loss,
and one woman's mental, physical, and spiritual
journey back to joy.

by

Linda Thompson

Dedication

This book is of course written for you my darling husband, my Don Quixote, dreamer of impossible dreams, my Michael Don Thompson (Buggy). Thank you so much for all the lessons you taught me, for making me a better me. I will always love you.

To my daughter, Tiffany Lynn:

Words cannot begin to express my love and appreciation to you for being Mike and my best friend, for how unbelievably strong you were when Jace died, and now for being the best mom on Earth for Sky Olivia and Dalton Barrett. You are wonderful, I love you and

I am so proud of you!

To my son, Jace Barrett

To my darling son who made laughter a constant component in my life...I think we did

OK this time around. I love and miss you so much.

When I leave this physical plain and go to heaven, I expect a party! The first person I want to see is my son, Jace. I will fly into his arms...Oh what a reunion that will be! Then we will rush over to my husband, Mike, my father, Warren (Gop), my grandmother, Lola Olivia, (Granny) and then all my other loved ones who have gone on before me. Next, I will embrace all my spirit guides, and Ghandi, Jesus, Mary, Martin Luther King Jr., Gilda Radner, Bob Marley, Dr. Suess and anyone else who will embrace me with the crystal purity of spiritual love. I do like diversity!

My thanks to Dr. Suess for the use of his perfect thoughts and words from:

OH, THE PLACES YOU WILL GO!

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Introduction

Since I believe life, love and laughter, pain and sorrow are our best teachers, I would like to share with you my life filled with both the highest highs and the lowest lows. This journey on earth has given me love beyond compare and has sent me spiritual soul mates with whom I have shared so much joy and laughter that I am sure no human being could be more blessed than I. I have also spent 17 of the toughest years of my life being the caregiver of a quadriplegic husband, and then the universe dealt me my greatest challenge, feeling pain beyond compare with the death of a child.

Clinical depression has been my best friend because it reminded me I was still alive when I really didn't care. It is when we reach the bottom that we receive the gift of learning the greatest lessons. Depression and the events which gave it birth sent me on a desperate quest. My spiritual growth and first-hand experience with miracles and angels are a direct result of my darkest hours. I was reborn with the understanding that I am wonderful, you are wonderful, we are all one and happiness is attainable even in the midst of life's worst challenges.

*My name is Linda and I am wonderful; how dare I not be.
Our creator worked so hard on me.*

Know it and believe it, I am wonderful and you are wonderful too. We owe it to ourselves, to those we love, to our world, to the whole universe and to our universal parents who created us to believe the best about ourselves. We have been created wonderfully, with the ability to send positive energy to every person with whom we come in contact.

Today, right this instant is the time for you to begin to know the wonderful person you are. Happiness is your birth right and mine. We all deserve joy and it is within each of us. What makes you and me wonderful? We are created that way. The wonder and beauty of every soul that comes to this earthly home is that we each have the ability to have a positive effect upon every person with whom we cross paths. The random contact we have with one another varies in ramification from the simple: We may make the choice to allow the person in the car ahead of us to enter the line of traffic in front of us... to the complex relationships: We may choose to be the best possible parent we can be. And in every incident where we make contact with another human being we can choose to be loving and kind. The positive energy we can emit with a smile to a stranger, a hug for a friend, an encouraging word for the lonely...the list is infinite... makes us indeed wonderful beings. No one is excluded. The unlimited positive energy within every soul on earth makes each of us wonderful.

We each have the choice to believe in our goodness or not. You and only you control what you think of yourself. Money is not the root of all evil! Insecurity is the root of all evil. Any crime against our neighbor, or brother, our fellow man or woman can be traced back to insecurity. Our insecurities are the basis for all jealousy, deceit, anger, physical and mental abuse, lying, cheating, stealing, murder and so on. Insecurities rob your joy and squelch your chances for happiness. It is only when you decide you are wonderful and you love yourself that you can be of real value to your family, friends and this world. A man who believes in himself

does not mentally or physically abuse his wife. A woman who knows her tremendous worth would never allow abuse. We guarantee our success in life through believing in ourselves and in our wonderful ability to affect the lives of others in a positive way.

We are all wonderful and so much alike - different packages, same contents. We love our children and grandchildren; we worry over the jobs that feed us; and we all desire love and happiness. We all have fears, strengths and weaknesses, but each of us is a soul, a wonderful creation able to learn, grow and become the best we can be.

The revelation that we are all so much alike came to me as I was looking at a wide cross section of "My Space" pages on the internet. My age is 60, an old person trying desperately to break into the age of technology. And for those of you who are as computer illiterate as me, My Space pages are the newest way for people to get to know each other. They are personal Web pages where people share their favorite music, personality traits, professions, interests, family, etc. As I meandered through a myriad of beautiful, wonderful people who put themselves out there online, I realized we all have the same needs.

We are all seeking happiness, loving and wishing to be loved, but we react to the things that happen to us in life differently. Why? What is the difference between those of us who consider ourselves successful in our careers, our personal relationships, our spiritual attainment and the men and women who are disillusioned, and feel lacking? The difference is in the doing! The choice belongs to each individual. No person is greater than the next. We are all one! I for example am an ordinary person who has discovered the importance of being me, loving me and at the same time loving the entire universe for we are all one and the same. Just like falling dominos each life becomes a part of the next because all of our choices affect other people.

Because of my faults, my pain, my short comings, my achievements and lessons learned, and because of the beautiful souls who have played the critical roles in helping me become me, I would like to share my story, the good and bad. On my journey this life time, clinical depression has been my best friend because it reminded me I was still alive when I really didn't care. It is when we reach the lowest of lows that we receive the gift of learning the greatest lessons. Deep dark depression and the events which gave it birth sent me on a desperate quest. My spiritual growth and first-hand experience with miracles and angels are a direct result of my darkest hours. I have been reborn with the understanding that I am wonderful, you are wonderful, we are all one and happiness is attainable even in the midst of life's worst challenges.

It's all about destiny. And yet, we always have a choice. Nothing in life is black and white. Even the age old question of destiny versus free will is actually both. Our lives have a definite path, thus destiny, but at important junctures, we must make choices. Begin a new job? End a relationship? Change health habits? Make a move to a new state? How on Earth do we go about deciding which path is best?

This book is about surmounting insecurities, fighting your fears, helping you to make the right choices, living life to the fullest, reaching your best destiny and finding joy and happiness no matter what your life circumstances might be. It is also about the help that is at our beck and call. Finding happiness and accomplishing our best destiny is possible by realizing we are never alone. We do not have to climb this mountain by ourselves. Our creator would have never thrown us out onto this Earthly plane without backup.

"We are never alone." Most of us have heard this phrase in church or through random things we have read or heard on television or radio. Most of us also think how nice that would be, but do we really believe it? Oh it is a nice thought, but most of us don't take it seriously. I'm

a pragmatist; I'm telling you the literal truth. Each one of us on this planet has guides at our disposal, 24/7. Do we listen? Not always. Should we listen? Absolutely! Our guides or guardian angels are here to help us create our best destiny, learn our planned lessons, share the lessons we have already learned with those we are sent to teach, and then to help us make the transition home once we have accomplished this life on earth. I believe by reading the experiences of my life, the miracles I have witnessed and the messages I have received from the other side, you will understand why I can say emphatically, we are never alone.

One of my challenges in writing this book is to help you realize how wonderful you are, regardless of your past and how important it is for you to get beyond your insecurities by listening to your personal spiritual support system. For those of you who have endured loss, it is my intent for this book to be a guide for surviving the special challenges depression can bring at the loss of a loved one. I will share my communications from the other side and the magical healing that comes from knowing without doubt we do go on and our loved ones are waiting for us when we make our journey home.

I will also share my physical, mental and emotional struggle with depression which was the outcome of painful life experiences and from having the important hormones and neurotransmitters robbed from my body by time and stress. There are answers for the things that are going wrong with your body, like depression, weight gain, excessive allergies and sleeplessness. I want you to know beyond all doubt you are the author of your story; you have the ability to create your own happiness and the responsibility to become the best you can be. My goal is to help you create your best destiny and it is my prayer you will in turn want to help others. Positive energy is always best shared.

My life can be summarized in one line of one of my favorite Jimmy Buffet songs: “Some of its magic, some of its tragic, but I’ve had a good life all the way.”

Chapter 1: Linda

*“Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You’re off to Great Places!
You’re off and away!”*

My childhood was glorious! I had the great fortune to have parents and grandparents who loved and adored me and our home was always filled with fun and laughter. I vividly remember at age eight sitting on my Granny’s sunny front porch with giant purple hydrangeas in the flower bed beside me. The thought popped into my head.....*I am the happiest person on Earth.*

We were a typical middle-class family in the fifties. My parents, who both worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad, were raising two kids in a modest home in Houston, Texas. My baby sister, Denise, came along almost seven years after me. Because of the age difference, I felt more like a mother to her than a sister. Our life was golden which had nothing to do with money...Mama quit working when I was three and although daddy never missed a day of work, I can still remember mama saying “Eney meeny miney mo.” as to which bills got paid each month...Our wonderful life had little to do with money. It was about feeling loved. Mama and Daddy constantly told me and showed me how precious I was to them.

My only complaint as a child was that my father called me a “dumb kid.” Isn’t it weird and horrifying how easily children attach themselves to negativity? Unfortunately, I believed my dad and even though hurting me in any way was the last thing in my father’s mind, that belief system became the basis for most of my insecurities. I was well into my thirties before I realized I was an intelligent human being.

Being a “dumb kid,” I hated school. I was in the yellow bird reading group. There were red birds and blue birds and then the dumb kids in the yellow bird group. It was so humiliating, but because I was one of those weird nerdy kids who did everything my parents told me to do, I survived grade school, high school and went on to college, Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches, Texas. I kept my nose to the grindstone and graduated in three and a half years with a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling. It was a new program at the time and the whole concept made a lot of sense to me. The state appropriated funds to train or retrain individuals who had special needs or handicaps and then placed them in the workplace. Rehabilitation councilors were needed to facilitate the process.

After graduation I was unable to find a job in the field of rehabilitation so in the spring of 1970, and at the wise age of 21, I got my first job with the Tuberculosis and Lung Association in Houston. I had never had a job before and was utterly unprepared for what I was to do. I fumbled along there for about a year feeling very inadequate and insecure, accomplishing very little and decided if I got married, I’d have someone to take care of me. Because I loved my family, I was sure I would be a great success at marriage and motherhood. Yes, yes, I know it’s not pretty but it is honest and I am afraid I probably am not the only person on the planet who got married as a way out of something. Since I had been a happy child, adored my parents and family life as a whole, I decided I would find a husband and get married. That of course, I thought would solve all my problems since marriage and family are good things. Although I was extremely insecure at the time, I was still an optimist and felt I was capable of making any relationship work.

Major life lesson No. 1: Getting married for the wrong reason.

Please do not misunderstand. I believe in marriage, life partners, soul mates, love and permanent unions, but for the right reasons. Destiny led me to a good man. He was a Marine Corp Lieutenant, very handsome, had a college degree, was very polite, and so after spending just two weeks together, we got married. Two weeks! *Arrrrrg!* If the Genus Book of World Records had a category for *Most opposite human beings*, Bob and I could have made the record book. For 10 years we both tried very hard to be happy, but since our relationship was based on my insecurities, there was no hope for our union. We battled non-stop. Our differences were mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. I had never seen my parents have the first fight in all the years growing up and in this marriage of ours; we were in a constant state of disagreement. We seemed to have no common ground. Twice I left him, only to return to try once again to reconcile the hopeless situation. I was of the mistaken opinion that it was not possible for me to get a divorce and so we made each other miserable, never coming close to loving or caring about each other the way two people should. I knew from the beginning the marriage was wrong, but fear, ego, and hard headedness kept me stuck where I didn't belong. Was it a wasted 10 years? Absolutely not. We had two wonderful children and many hard earned life lessons.

Destiny has a way of teaching us, if we are willing to learn. I take responsibility for that bad marriage. I used the marriage as a way to avoid taking care of myself. My weakness caused a lot of pain for all parties involved. Although I don't believe in the kind of sin which leads to hell, fire and brimstone, I do believe the worst thing we can do on this Earth is to hurt another human being. I also believe our karma will always be balanced and we will feel the pain we have caused, whether it is in this lifetime or another.

After 10 years of unhappiness, I was 32 years-old, leaving a miserable marriage in Socorro, New Mexico with the only things that mattered to me, my four-year-old daughter,

Tiffany and eight-year-old son, Jace. I felt completely worthless, as if no one in the history of time had failed as badly as I had. I was scared to death, with no job, two children to support, two hundred dollars to my name and two little Pekingese dogs, Spot and Butch.

It was hot as Hades and our little red Ford Fiesta had no air conditioning. We made it as far as Elephant Butte Reservoir, a small body of water, desolate, devoid of anything living save a few lonely lizards and only an hour away from Socorro, and 30 hours left to travel to my parent's home in Lufkin, Texas. It had to be at least 106 degrees outside. All four of my passengers were crying, moaning, sweating and panting about the heat. So I pulled the little red car off the road, drove right out through the desert, screeched to a halt, threw open my door and screamed as loudly as I could, "Everyone in the water!" I didn't have to say it twice. The race was on, dogs, kids, and mom dove clothes and all into the lukewarm water. It was heaven! Laughing loudly, arms outstretched toward the sky, coming up out of the water that day, I was born again, baptized, with the knowledge that no matter what life had in store for me, no matter how many stinky-dog, hot-little-car, crying-children days I had ahead of me in this life, there would always be a lukewarm reservoir in which to fall, to cool my journey and help me on my way.

Looking back on that day, I realize it was a major turning point, and I learned another life lesson. Never travel 30 hours with two wet Pekingese dogs. Did I mention they got car sick before we made it to the reservoir?

Major life lesson No. 2: Lean on your higher power, listen for guidance and no matter how frightened you get, trust and do it!

Staying in a counterproductive relationship due to fear or guilt is not only wrong for you, it is wrong for the person you are with. If you can't get out for yourself, do it for the other person. The negative energy that two unhappy people can produce affects all family life,

children and even carries over into the workplace, and throughout the universe. Do the thing you know in your heart is right. Your soul always has the right answer. Ask for guidance from your guardian angels. They are always there guiding whether you ask or not, but listen. Fight the fear. Step up, step out, reach beyond the safety of now and begin whatever it is you know you are supposed to be doing.

I was terrified of leaving my first marriage. I was so afraid I wouldn't be able to support my children. Jace had a birth defect, which affected the length of his left leg and foot. His left foot was deformed with only four toes and measured half the size of his right. What if Jace had special needs I could not afford? Tiffany was born with no abnormalities, but what if something happened to her and I was unable to find funds to cover her needs? Without the financial support I had always had to care for them, I was so afraid I would fail them.

I have such love and empathy for single parents. It is a really lonely and frightening place to be. If you are a single parent and going through the fears of inadequacy and helplessness, call on your higher power. It works! "Knock and the door will be opened unto you." It is as simple as saying out loud, "Help me!" And help is on the way.

Listening to your gut feelings and making the decision to do something that is hard may be like leaving a relationship that you know is wrong, or changing a job that is dragging you down or launching off into starting your own business. All this is scary stuff! You question yourself, "Am I right or am I wrong?" Listen to your intuitive sense, your soul. Your soul will never lead you astray. Your head will tell you all the reasons it is safer to stay where you are, "I'm 55 years-old, and I may not find another mate. I'll be lonely forever." Or, "I'm 45 years-old. It's too late for me to change jobs or start my own business." Do not listen to your head!

Lean on your higher power, listen for guidance, and then no matter how frightened you get, trust and do it!

A really cool thing happens when you follow the guidance of your soul. You will begin to receive messages from your spiritual guides. Yes, you have a backup team at all times. We have so much help from the other side if we will only listen. And the second you make the decision to make the right choice for your life, your team of guides fly into action letting you know you are on the right track. These messages can come in the form of song lyrics or unexpected people coming into your life. Friends or family may call who have been through the same thing and made the wrong choice and are miserable for having done so. Or the opposite, your cousin, Sue may show up on your door step and tell you the amazing success in her newest entrepreneurial endeavor. Probably unbeknownst to her, she is there to be your cheerleader. Your answer could come in the form of a dream. You will receive messages. Later in the book, I'll discuss one of the many miracles in my life that was a message to me and a message to a total stranger at the same time.

The remainder of my trip to Lufkin was rather grim. I couldn't eat or sleep as the guilt I felt at having separated my kids and their father was enormous.

Chapter 2: Warren and Bessie King

*With your head full of brains
and your shoes full of feet,
You're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.*

My 30-hour trip with two small kids and two small wet dogs in a really hot little car smack in the middle of summer in the south had its challenges, but we made it home safely to my mom and dad. Thank God for good parents. As far as Earthly angels are concerned, I attribute much of my joy to my parents, Warren and Bessie King and to my paternal grandmother, Lola Olivia King. My parents and granny are the reasons for so much of my happiness. Never underestimate the importance of the roll you play as a parent or grandparent.

Because I firmly believe kids are God's very best idea, let me digress in my story for a moment. Please be aware of the energy you send out to children. If you have children, grandchildren, relative's children, or you only occasionally run across a child on an elevator, or in a supermarket, be aware of the importance of your smile, your demeanor. Every second we spend on this Earth loving a child, smiling, hugging, speaking to, respecting, listening to, envisioning good things for, believing in, we become co-creators in a wonderful human being and a better world. Always be aware of the effect of your positive energy when around a child.

When I was a little girl we had a family friend that I called Aunt Ruth. She was a precious older woman who had a talent for telling stories about little woodland animals who traveled on wonderful adventures. I adored the stories and couldn't wait to get to Aunt Ruth's house to scramble into her lap and listen, spellbound. Today, when I look into the bright blue eyes of one of my precious grandchildren, sitting in my lap listening to stories of little woodland creatures, I understand the meaning of love that transcends time. Even if you only pass a child in a public place and make eye contact for a second, make that second count. Put on your brightest

smile and send telepathic love and positive energy her way. It costs you nothing but it may be a second she remembers forever.

Obviously, I poured love and affection on my children and now on my granddaughter, but I also make it a practice to recognize all the children who cross my path even if it is only for the three minutes I stand behind them in a grocery checkout line. As adults, it is our responsibility to surround any child, all children with positive energy. There is nothing you could accomplish while on this Earthly plane that could be more important than the impact you have on the children with whom you come in contact.

As I arrived at my parent's place with the kids, dogs and a car load of bags, we were all welcomed with open arms and so much love. The kids and I spent two years there while I went back to school to get a second degree in education. I became an elementary school teacher. I am so appreciative of those years spent with my parents. I tried to constantly let them know how grateful I was that they had provided a port in the storm. I'm still amazed at how graciously and lovingly they kept me and my motley crew. Even the *lice incident* didn't shake them. Yep, while I was doing my student teaching, I got a call at school one day that I needed to pick up Jace and Tiffany. They were in a different elementary school from the one in which I was student teaching. I was horrified as the nurse calmly explained that my two children had head lice and I needed to pick them up immediately. I was given strict instructions that they could not return to school until they had been treated, all nits removed from their hair and then rechecked by the school nurse. My ignorance of how lice are passed from one person to the next by simply jumping or flying caused me great embarrassment, as I was under the ignorant impression lice were only associated with being dirty or staying in filthy living conditions.

After surviving the initial shock, I drove over to the kid's school. When I saw them, they were obviously very embarrassed too, but we were all scared to death at the thought of telling my parents, "Gammy" and "Gop" (As a toddler, Jace's recreation of Grandmamma and Grandpappa). Gammy was known for being an immaculate house keeper and we knew she would be furious at the fact that we had brought lice into her home.

Unbeknownst to Jace, Tiffany and I, the school nurse had already called and informed Gammy and Gop the kids had lice and so when we arrived home, heads tucked, fearful, we opened the front door to Gammy and Gop standing in the entry, actually hopping up and down scratching all parts of their bodies, laughing. Jace and Tiffany joined them doing the "lice dance" and we all laughed until we cried. Thank God for wonderful parents, especially those with a great sense of humor. That night we all got shampooed with the special lice soap. For good measure, Jace got a really short hair cut, and to avoid cutting Tiffany's long blond curls, Gammy and I stayed up all night picking nits out of her hair while Tiffany slept. I was determined the kids would not miss another day of school.

The whole lice adventure was a typical example of the great legacy my father, Warren King left me. Daddy taught me the great value of laughter. At the time the kids and I lived with my parents, none of us could know of the huge challenges we had to face in our future. Looking back, I now know it was Daddy teaching us to laugh even at the bad stuff that helped us through most of it.

I have always said about myself, "When I make mistakes, I make giant ones, but I do my best not to make the same mistake again." I was determined that I would never have another relationship based on needing someone to take care of me. I worked very hard in my education courses and at the same time took a correspondence course in interior design, which was

something I loved to do. I was hired by the same school where I did my student teaching and began looking for a house to buy. I was going to be self sufficient! Jace, Tiffany, and I bought a small home in Huntington, Texas, only about ten miles from Gammy and Gop and life was good. I was out on my own, taking care of myself and my children. I felt proud, safe and happy.

Just two years following my divorce, I was a single mom who had made it, I guess. In 1985, school teachers in east Texas qualified for food stamps, but I didn't care. I was too proud to accept food stamps, and even though we didn't have any extras, we had a roof over our heads, enough food to eat and each other. Life was good. I derived such joy from knowing I was doing this on my own that I fully expected I would remain single forever, which just goes to show how wrong I could be...again!

